



Stony Stratford Town Council

FULLERS SLADE/GALLEY HILL/STONY STRATFORD TOWN

TOWN CRIER

WINTER 2021

Stony, Stony, How Does Your Garden Grow? Read all about the amazing volunteers that keep our town beautiful!



The Big Winter Changeover!



Green-Fingered Pupils at St Mary & St Giles



Thank You Stony In Bloom!



**On 16th November 2021
Stony Stratford Town
Council Declares a Climate
Emergency! 'There is no
Planet B'**

Background: On 31st October – 12th November 2021, the UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26).

Climate change will affect us all and is affecting Stony Stratford NOW! December 2020 saw the worst floods for many years. The impacts of climate breakdown are already causing serious damage around the world. The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018;

a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and

b) confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector.

If the world is to stay within 1.5°C rise, developed countries like the UK need to cut emissions faster than poorer countries and achieve net-zero carbon by 2030.

Strong policies to cut emissions also have associated health, well-being and economic benefits.

Whilst national governments need to act ambitiously on climate change through legislation and international cooperation, we believe there is also a lot we can do as a town, and as neighbourhoods and households to reduce our carbon footprint and create a greener, more healthy future for everyone in Stony Stratford.

What does 'Declaring a Climate Emergency' mean for Stony Stratford Town Council in principal?

Working with Milton Keynes Council, other partners and local organisations to help make Stony Stratford carbon neutral by 2030

Work with our providers to ensure our services are delivered in a way that helps to tackle the crisis

Work with NALC and other representative bodies to ensure we share best practice across the sector

Setting up a Climate Working Group to work up an Action Plan with associated budget

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Come and join the Climate Working Group, led by Cllr Hannah O'Neill. Contact Lynne Compton, Town Clerk for details: office@stonystratford.gov.uk or 01908-566726. All welcome!

There is no Planet B!
There is no Planet B!

MKC Government Grant Funds: We have been working closely with MKC (and their contractors, Ringway), Stony Stratford Business Association (SSBA) and local organisations for plans to utilise these funds for Stony Stratford;

⇒ *Welcome Back Fund (£40K) – improvement works on High Street, Market Square, Horsefair Green and the area adjacent to the shops in Galley Hill.*

⇒ *£20K of Restrictions Grant Funding to support increased footfall to High Streets over the Christmas Period.*

⇒ *Economic Recovery fund (20K): £14,700 allocated to SSBA towards town events, £5,300 to Stony Stratford Town Council for town events and Neighbourhood Plan Initiatives.*

Neighbourhood Plan Initiatives: High Street Design for the Future: We are excited to let you know that the concept design, which we have been working on with Jacobs is nearly ready. We are expecting to consult on this in the New Year. Once a scheme is agreed, Capital funding will be needed from Government (via Milton Keynes Council) for implementation.

5-7 Church Street Update: (please see photos on opposite page)

Work started slowly due to structural issues but is now progressing well. Please see further details on our website: <https://www.stonystratford.gov.uk/about-us/redevelopment-of-5-7-church-street>.

New First Floor Kitchenette - Thanks to Friends of Stony Stratford Library (FoSSL)! We are very grateful to FoSSL for offering to fund the installation of the kitchenette in the new meeting room at 5-7 Church Street.

External Audit - Conclusion of Audit for the Year ended 2020/21: I am pleased to inform you that there were no issues arising in the audit and the Council has been given a clean bill of health. The link to the Audit report is: <https://www.stonystratford.gov.uk/about-us/finances>.

Grants Awarded September to November 2021
 £495 to Stony Stratford Business Association to help fund the Stony Stratford Christmas Lighting scheme
 £280 to Stony Stratford Lions towards P.A costs and brass band for Remembrance Sunday
 £480 Crafting for Change to fund a 10 week taster course prof fees, materials and room hire
 £350 Mr Simpson's Little Consort to pay the artists to enable a family performance on the Tudors to be given free of charge to families

STOP PRESS!!! Grant funding for Organisations/Events: This year we have supported local organisations and events with grants totalling over £3,500. If you are thinking of organising an event in the Financial Year 2021/22 which may need additional funding, please give the Clerk details as soon as possible. The next meeting where grants will be considered is 18th January 2022. If you are looking at a new event for 2022/23 and might need funding, please let the Clerk know.

And finally, a **huge THANK YOU to all the fantastic volunteers who have worked tirelessly throughout these challenging times!** Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year! Please note that the Town Council office will be closed between **Thursday 23rd December 2021 to Monday 3rd January 2022 inclusive**. The Office will re-open on **Tuesday 4th January 2022**.
Lynne Compton, PSLCC, Cert HE

Photos of 5-7 Church Street Refurbishment



Stony Stratford Flooding Response Plan: We all remember the effect of flooding of Christmas 2020. If Stony Stratford floods again, we want to be ready. So, the Town Council is working with the Environment Agency and Milton Keynes Council Flood and Water Management Team to construct a Flooding Response Plan for Stony Stratford. This will be a reference handbook of practical steps for volunteers to take in order to keep residents and properties as safe as possible during a flooding event. It includes things such as early warning door knocking, help with moving items to upper floors, and staffing designated respite centres. Volunteer flood wardens will be central to this plan, so if you would like to become a volunteer warden, we want to hear from you. Town Council will arrange an event in the New Year where anybody who is interested in becoming a volunteer flood warden can come and see what is involved. There will be a presentation from the Environment Agency and the opportunity to find out how you can help your community in a future emergency flood event. Please watch our website for details.

Winter Landscape works: Our contractors are currently undertaking winter pruning and tidying works. This involves cutting back overgrown hedges and shrubs, pruning broken and/or dangerous tree branches, removing epicormic growth (young branch shoots at the base of trees), and clearing



lamp columns. Coverage of the whole parish will be on an approximate six-week rotation, unless affected by weather conditions; for example: the contractors spent some significant time after the recent strong winds dealing with fallen branches. If you have a landscape issue that you believe requires attention outside this winter schedule, or is dangerous, then please email landscape@stonystratford.gov.uk.

Issues with trees - a reminder of who to contact for help: The Town Council are responsible for tree maintenance such as lifting low hanging branches and trimming epicormic growth. If the issue requires more specialist attention or cannot be reached from the ground using a pole (i.e. up to 2m from the ground over a footpath or 3m over a redway), then Milton Keynes Council should be contacted. Contact the Town Council by emailing landscape@stonystratford.gov.uk or calling 01908 566726. Report issues to Milton Keynes Council by using the 'Report it' button on the MKC website homepage, or call 01908 691691.

Litter picking kits: Kits are available to borrow from the Town Council offices. Kits are sanitised before/after use and lending of the kits will be in line with the current safety guidelines. To borrow the kits, please contact: dtc@stonystratford.gov.uk.

Interactive trails around the parish using the Love Exploring App: Fancy bumping into virtual fairies and reindeer this Christmas and earning yourself a free café voucher at the same time? Download the free Love Exploring Christmas trail around Stony to your phone; answer questions along the trail, spot the characters and earn cafe tokens. For further information please see: <https://loveexploring.co.uk/> to download the App.

Karen Hiser, Deputy Town Clerk

Planning: For current applications please visit: <https://public.access2.milton-keynes.gov.uk/online-applications>. Click 'search' for a list of applications where decisions have been made.

Christmas Farmers Market: The wonderful Christmas Farmers Market will be held on Christmas Eve in the Market Square (Friday 24th December, 9am-2pm). Alongside the regular array of fantastic stalls full of locally sourced and produced goodies, the St Mary and St Giles band will be playing Christmas carols to get you into that festive mood. Plus, there will be free mulled wine and mince pies, free children's face painting and maybe even an appearance from Father Christmas himself! Come and pick up something special for Christmas and support your local Farmers Market.

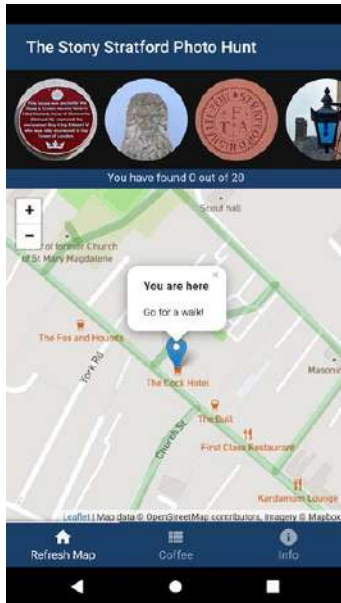


February Half Term Play Sessions: During February half term we are hoping to arrange some indoor fun! This will be in the form of messy play sessions provided by MK Play Association, and indoor futsal and dodgeball games run by the MK Dons. Dates are yet to be finalised, so keep an eye on our website, noticeboards and Facebook page. Come and join the fun!

Allotments: The Town Council's two allotment sites; Wolverton Road and Boundary Crescent, are both currently full, but if you wish to become an allotment holder, please fill in the form on the Town Council website or contact the Deputy Town Clerk for a form (dtc@stonystratford.gov.uk) to be put on the waiting list.

Stony's Community Spirit!

Stony Stratford Photo Hunt



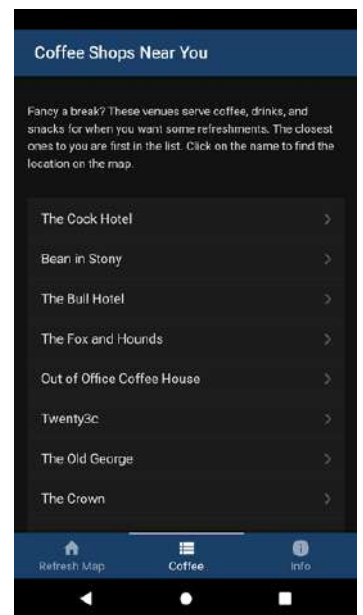
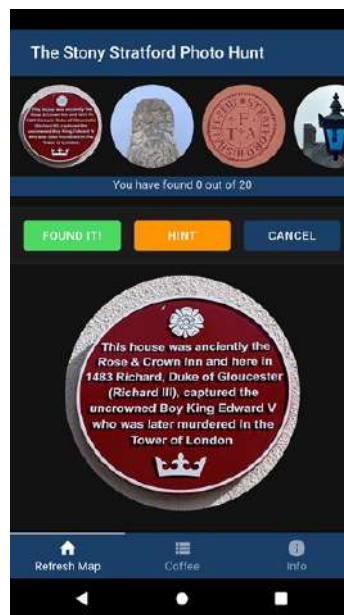
Looking for something to do that's a bit different? A local Stony Stratford company, Rectangle Red, have come up with a photo hunt around Stony Stratford. It's app based so you simply download the free app onto your phone and away you go, walking along a highlighted route trying to spot the photos shown in the gallery. Scroll through, left or right to see the images and when you think you've found the picture simply click 'found it' and see if you are correct. You'll know if you're right and

the picture will go green making it easier to see which photos are left to find. There's 20 photos to find, some easier than others. They've even added a list of local coffee shops, so if you fancy a break click on coffee and it will list places in those that are closest to you.

Rectangle Red is a software consultancy business in Stony Stratford. They write bespoke software systems for small to medium sized businesses to help them achieve more for their customers. They also write apps, web portals and

server based systems and databases across a wide variety of sectors and applications as well as offering support for existing systems. The reason for the recent app is because they wanted to give something back to the community and support the High Street. This is the first photo hunt but more are in development for other local towns.

To download the app go to the app store and simply search for Photo Hunt Stony Stratford or visit the website where you'll find the links to the app stores <https://www.rectanglered.com/photohunt>.



Horsefair Green Memorial Gardens

A community effort

Horsefair Green Memorial Gardens are maintained by a core volunteer group of five Stony Stratford residents living around the Green. When planting, weeding or just tidying up, we can call on additional help if needed. During the year we estimate we have spent 150 hours working on the gardens.



We rely on the support of our local MK councillors, and on occasions the *Town Council*, to pay for the plants and materials. Councillor Joe Earnshaw recently donated £250 from the discretionary allowance, allocated by *Milton Keynes Council*. This effectively paid for all our Winter bedding and bulbs. A great help!

In the last few weeks we removed the summer bedding, dug over the borders to try and remove some of the tree roots, and spread a nutritious layer of our home-made leaf compost. We planted over 600 multi-coloured violas, pansies and bellis. In addition, 250 tulip bulbs and 250 daffodil bulbs were planted as well as more saved from previous years. We are hoping for a brilliant display in Spring.

In the weeks leading up to **Armistice Day** and **Remembrance Sunday**, we worked hard to make sure the gardens looked at their best. Edges were trimmed, and the gravel weeded and sifted. *MK Council* provided half a cubic metre of pea gravel and at long last we were able to top-up the bare patches. *Millstream*, the *SSTC* landscape contractors, used a leaf blower to clear the garden of leaves and 10 wheelie bins later, our leaf compost pile was full. They also strimmed the grass to finish off the tidying-up process.

To try and cut costs in the next spring planting, we saved 100 geraniums from the *SSTB* planters in the High Street. These strong and healthy plants were cut down and re-potted and will spend the Winter at the London Road Allotments.

By the New Year we hope that some of the rotten chain-link posts will have been replaced, and once they have been, we will repaint the chain-links.

In the past year this small patch of garden has become much sought after as a place to meet, to sit and relax, and as an oasis of calm in the centre of the town. Its value to the town has increased, and like everyone else, we aim to cherish and nurture it in the year to come.

Mason Edwards, *Horsefair Green Gardening Group*



Promoting Prosperity & Wellbeing

The town's Business Association has successfully bid for and received a grant of over £14,000 from Milton Keynes Council to support events and initiatives to welcome shoppers and visitors into Stony Stratford. The money comes from the government's Welcome Back Fund and will be used to publicise events in the town over the coming year, as well as supplementing the Christmas lights scheme and the summer floral and bunting decorations. This grant means that Stony Stratford can look forward to the town's economy bouncing back bigger and better.

Another recent success by the Association has been to obtain a commitment from Milton Keynes Council's Head of Highways to restore the High Street to its former state before the end of the financial year, with the parking bays reinstated. This followed a unanimous decision by the Town Council to support the move.

The Business Association is pleased to be able to have a full, spectacular and even larger Christmas lights

display this year following 2020's reduced scheme. Chairman Ross Ellens said:

"Stony has so much going for it over the festive season which makes it a very special place to shop. We've lots of independent shops that always enjoy participating in our window display competition and our Christmas lights are renowned throughout the region as being the best!"



Classic Stony & Vintage Stony are run in partnership with Stony Stratford Business Association



Stony FLAG (Flood Action Group)

was launched by concerned residents after the devastating Christmas floods of 2020 which affected a reported 54 properties (and, we believe, many more than that). The floods caused an estimated £2.5m worth of damage to Stony residents' houses and cars, as well

as taking an incalculable toll on mental and emotional health as people struggled to get their houses back in order. Our aim is to investigate and address the contributing factors to the floods and work with the relevant authorities (such as the Environment Agency, Milton Keynes Council, Anglian Water and The Parks Trust) to prevent, or reduce, flooding in future. The FLAG team is affiliated with, and has received invaluable advice and support from, the National Flood Forum (a charity to help, support and represent people at risk of flooding).

Flood Warning: Residents did not receive any warnings, so they were unable to make preparations before the water came. On the night of the 23rd December the flood water started to surge, with some residents waking up on the 24th December to find their houses flooded and their cars floating away.

Flood Flow: There are two watercourses for getting flood water downstream and away from Stony. The first is the river, and the second is the stream that separates Tombs Meadow from the Barley Mow field. This takes the water under the High Street, past the North End pond, alongside the old Gasworks site and through the culverts on Queen Eleanor Street to the Nature Reserve beyond. There has been little or no maintenance of the river course for years. Every culvert on the High Street and Queen Eleanor Street is at least partially blocked, and ditches either side of the river have not been maintained. Fences have been erected at both ends of the watercourse in Tombs Meadow and at the culvert under the High Street; they caught debris and acted like a barrier preventing the flood water flowing freely. We are working with the relevant authorities to address these problems.



Culvert linking Tombs Meadow to the north end pond



Looking downstream from the main river bridge

Flood Plain Development: There has been considerable building on the floodplain in Stony since 1998 as well as further upstream. The individual houses, or estates, are raised so that the new developments do not flood but no mitigation measures are put in place for the established properties. Thus each new development adds incrementally to the flooding of Stony.

FLAG: With climate change and the increase in extremes of weather, more properties in Stony are likely to be at risk of flooding. This will increase insurance premiums and could make it more difficult or impossible to sell homes. Join us to help keep Stony a great place to live for ourselves and future generations. Contact Sue Malleison: sue@malleison.co.uk.

Stony in Bloom Gains 'Outstanding Award' in National Finals of Britain in Bloom



Stony Stratford in Bloom

Stony Stratford in Bloom (SSIB) volunteers were delighted and immensely proud to discover in September that in the National Finals of the Britain in Bloom competition we'd gained an 'Outstanding Award' for Nourishing the Community – one of only four awarded in the country! The RHS has

sent us a beautiful Welsh slate plaque, which we hope to be able to display on the Library wall when the renovations there are completed.

Shortly before the results were announced, the RHS wrote to ask if they could bring an RHS photographer to photograph us at work in the York House Community Gardens, where we've been growing vegetables to donate to the King's Community Food Bank in Wolverton and the Fullers Slade Food Pantry. They also took pictures in SMSG School, where vegetables and fruit have been grown for the Food Bank as well. They emphasised that they were hugely impressed by the children and also all that we'd achieved at York House. Since then, fabulous pictures from the day have been popping up in RHS online bulletins. Even better, our project was chosen to illustrate the Nourishing the Community Award in The Garden Magazine.

But it wasn't just in the National Finals that SSIB did well – we also had fantastic results in the Regional Competition – gaining Excellent for Pride of Place; Excellent for Conservation and Wildlife; Excellent for Responding to Covid 19; and Excellent for Encouraging Children and Young People to Grow. In addition, the It's Your Neighbourhood Groups in the parish excelled too – with Mary Robinson's North End Pond and Wildlife Area, York House Community Gardens and Bianca's Fullers Slade IYN gaining Certificates of Excellence; and the more recently formed Horsefair Green Residents Group and the Galley Hill IYN (which Anu Chundur formed this year), gaining Certificates of Achievement.

Local residents have helped to keep the town looking beautiful too - Stony in Bloom handed out over 130 Cheering the Town with Flowers certificates to those who make an effort with colourful floral baskets, tubs or front gardens. We also distributed sunflower plants to more elderly or vulnerable residents who we thought might like a little cheer in these difficult days of continuing pandemic; and many sent lovely pictures of them in bloom and reaching for the sky.

Gardening never stops, of course, and SSIB volunteers have been working hard to maintain the perennial beds around the town with weeding and pruning and planting bulbs and annuals. The red, white and pink geraniums bloomed gloriously till the end of October, when we had the usual 3-day changeover of the planters. Pat Kyd master-minded day 1 and day 3 of the operation, having earlier worked out the order from the nurseries and the delivery of plants and compost. David Odell and Ray Copley organised the SSBA/Christmas Lights team to help with the removal of the tree baskets, barrier baskets and 3-tiers planters on Day 2. When the geraniums were taken out they were displayed on a give-away table in the High St for residents so these vibrant plants could enjoy life for a little longer on window sills!

Nourishing the community has continued well into the winter months too, with November boxes for the Foodbank and Fullers Slade, including gigantic parsnips, brassicas, onions, potatoes, chard and apples! SMSG School contributes valuable donations from the raised beds there, as do London Rd allotmenters, whose donations are coordinated by Andrea Quayle.

A welcome return to life before Covid was the annual Calcutta Brasserie Fundraiser, albeit with numbers limited. Calcutta Brasserie provided a mouth-watering banquet and gave SSIB £5 for each ticket. With this and the raffle we made an amazing £531! Many thanks to Back-to-the Fuchsia and Branch-out for stunning bouquets; Timor Court veg stall for £10 vegetable token – and Mill Apartments residents for prizes too.

Looking Ahead:

- *Planting a Tree for the Jubilee with children at SMSG School North and South Sites
- *Planting 10 blossom trees on Ostler's Lane, sponsored by Ron and Eileen Cox, Jane Wood, and part of Cllr Jenny Marklew's allocation for Stony Stratford
- *Joining with York House to plant a tree in memory of Alain Welch at York House Community Gardens
- *SSIB Plant Sale with York House Coffee morning May 21st 2022

New SSIB volunteers warmly welcomed!

Email Judith.deveson@gmail.com, phone 07985671379

<https://stonyinbloom.wixsite.com/stonyinbloom>

<https://www.facebook.com/stonyinbloom>

Judy Deveson, Chair, SSIB





Stony Stratford Sunflower Competition 2021

Drum roll please, the winners of the Stony Stratford Sunflower

Competition 2021 are:

'Open' category

Peter Bass, whose sunflower grew to a magnificent 331cm tall. Derek Gibbons grew the widest sunflower head at 31cm.

Russell Street School

Zac Kibble grew the tallest sunflower at a whopping 330cm tall.

Evie Malleson-Page grew the widest sunflower head at a mighty 30.4cm wide.

Lilith Hogston grew the tallest sunflower in the nursery group at 188cm tall, which also had the widest sunflower head at an impressive 28.5cm.

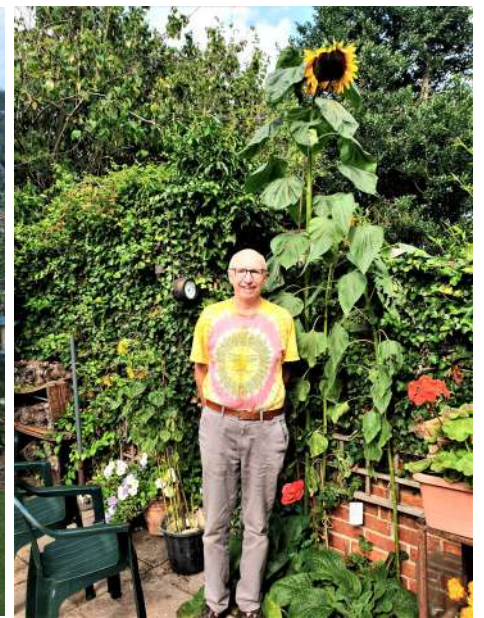
St. Mary & St. Giles School

Oliver Fernandez grew the tallest sunflower in the school and Stony Stratford, which reached an incredible 360cm tall. Jude Sumpter grew the widest sunflower head at a fantastic 26cm wide.

The winners of the tallest sunflowers from each school received a voucher for Dobbies Garden Centre, which have been generously donated by Stony Stratford in Bloom members Ron and Eileen Cox.

Huge congratulations to all the winners and everyone that entered the competition, and those who just enjoyed growing a sunflower at home. We hope the sunflowers spread some cheer across the town. Who knows, the Stony Stratford Sunflower Competition may well become an annual event.

Kate Shaw, SSIB



Stony's Sunflower Superstars!

From left to right, top to bottom: Peter Bass, Derek Gibbons, Zac Kibble and Oliver Fernandez

Eco Warriors: Children's Gardening

Regular school gardening has begun again at SMSG North site after the long stretch when Covid regulations made such sessions impossible – and the Eco Warriors are loving it! It's wonderful to see the pupils' enthusiasm for finding out about how things grow – and having the chance to sow seeds and harvest the produce from seeds sown earlier. The fruit and vegetables are then taken to the King's Community Foodbank in Wolverton and the Fullers Slade Food Pantry. There were excellent harvests of tomatoes from the polytunnel - and in the raised beds outside - potatoes, onions, beans, courgettes and brassicas. SSIB volunteers have had a warm welcome from Kate Holland, the Head Teacher.

On the last two sessions before half term the children cut up some of the vegetables they'd grown, and the following day SSIB volunteer, Kate Shaw, after turning the cut vegetables into soup, brought it for the children to taste for a lunchtime treat. They pronounced it the best (or in one case the second best) soup they'd ever tasted!

In SMSG South Site gardening is happening too with children in the Nursery. Anu Chundur, who set up the Galley Hill It's Your Neighbourhood Group, has been liaising with Lisa Shaw, the Nursery teacher, and Lisa and members of the Galley Hill group have prepared the ground for bulb-planting with the children and the creation of a sensory maze.





The Stony Stratford Pumpkin Trail 2021

During the October half-term the Stony Stratford Pumpkin Trail returned for a second year. The trail once again weaved its way around the streets and footpaths of the town, starting at Odells and leading its followers to York

House, where the Stony Stratford Lantern Project had created three beautiful panels of autumn pumpkins. Seven pumpkins, some grown by the children at St. Mary & St. Giles School, were hidden around the town, each one had been beautifully carved and decorated by local residents.

The event, organised by the Parents' Association of Russell Street School, raised an incredible £236. A huge thank you to everyone that supported the pumpkin trail from those who provided the location for the pumpkins, the incredible carvers and those who bought a map from Odells.

Kate Shaw



News from Russell Street School

In September the new school year began and we got off to a fantastic start by having a visit from a T-Rex! The children loved learning about dinosaurs and having the opportunity to look for fossils. In

November, to celebrate Remembrance Day

this year all the children in school contributed to a whole school display and took part in a two minutes silence.

Diwali: During our Diwali celebrations the children had a fantastic time listening to the story of Rama and Sita, wearing brightly coloured clothes and learning an Indian dance.



Out and About: Our children love learning about our local area and they enjoyed visiting our High Street, looking at local landmarks and creating maps of where we had visited.

We offer full time places at school for children aged 3-7 years. If you are interested in your child attending Russell Street School, please see our website for further information - www.russell-street-school.co.uk.

Jayne Van Rooyen, Deputy Headteacher

Talented Young Artists Win Local Drawing Competition

Lots of talented local young artists entered this year's Annual Essentially Local Christmas Drawing Competition. The entries were all of such a high standard that it was extremely hard to finally pick the winners. The judges felt every artist was a winner in their own right and everyone could definitely see some future winners.

This November, the Essentially Local team awarded the winners with their well-deserved prizes and certificates. The winners were all extremely pleased that their hard work paid off and all of them left with smiles on their faces. They used words like shocked, surprised, so happy and excited when they heard the news of their wins.

Throughout December, you can go and see all the pictures on exhibition in Wolverton Library - during opening hours. It is hoped that the pictures will make another appearance when Stony Library reopens. If you can't make it to Wolverton Library, the Essentially Local team will show a picture every day to celebrate each advent day as we count down to Christmas. In addition, they will produce a video of the artwork.

Emma Johnson, Essentially Local



Left to right: 3rd place, Jessica, age 4; 1st place, Archie, age 10; 2nd place, Netra, age 9; 4th place, Martin, age 5

St Mary & St Giles School Update

We have all enjoyed a very busy start to the new school year at SMSG. The school continues to go from strength to strength which is evident in our recent SIAMS Inspection report. All Church of England Schools are subject to a statutory inspection that focuses on the effectiveness of the school's distinctive Christian vision, and how pupils and adults flourish. We were delighted to achieve the gold standard outcome of Good across the board. The inspector wrote,

"They (the parents) say that kindness underpins the school's leadership and that this makes the school welcoming to all. In this way the school vision permeates throughout the school to create an atmosphere conducive to learning."

We are very proud of the progress we have made as a school and thank the local community for their continued support.

Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held at St Mary and St Giles Church with Father Ross. It was wonderful to be able to use the church now the Covid restrictions allow. We had over

300 children in the church who were excited to be back and their behaviour en route and in the church was outstanding. We donated a huge amount of food to the local foodbank.

As part of National Parliament Week, the children have all written a pledge to say how they can make a difference to making the world a greener place. Both sites now display campaign trees. Our Eco-Warriors have also been doing litter picks and regular planting with the Stony in Bloom team.

On the 11 November our Head pupils from both sites visited the Stony Stratford war memorial to lay wreaths on behalf of the children of SMSG and Russell Street School. In school, Daniel and Sammy played The Last Post on their trumpets and all observed the silence. It was a very memorable day.

We are very lucky to have the Galley Hill Residents Association working with our nursery team to develop the outside learning space. Anu has been tireless in her enthusiasm for making this happen. The children have been planting bulbs for the spring and there is a rather exciting plan for the creation of a sensory garden. Huge thanks to all involved.
Kate Holland, Headteacher



Girlguiding

Autumn term means that the nights are drawing in and the days get colder, but it's one of the best terms for the members of Girlguiding.

Christmas crafts a-plenty along with spooky activities and parties, as well as the Remembrance Day parade.



Stony Stratford Rainbows have been outside exploring nature this term, and have had a bug hunt, bark rubbing, painting salt dough leaves, bug bingo, and making hedgehog biscuits.

Stony Stratford Brownies enjoyed a trip out to Curly Tails pig sanctuary where they learned about rescue pigs, they even got to feed them, and all got very muddy. The Brownies have also been getting outside as much as they can

and have enjoyed a BBQ, making s'mores, been on a bat walk with The Parks Trust, and on a chippy walk.

Stony Stratford Guides have been working on activities to celebrate the Anglia region 50th Birthday, they joined in with making a card to swap with another unit in the region, along with a birthday party. The Guides have also been getting out as

much as possible (while the weather holds) enjoying outdoor cooking, going on walks, and playing as many games as they can jam into a meeting! All the local units attended the Remembrance Day parade this year and laid a wreath on behalf of the district.

All units are back face-to-face at meetings, however there is a big waiting list so if you are interested, please use the link below to register your daughter for either Guides (age 10 to 14), Brownies (age 7 to 10), or Rainbows (age 5 to 7). Or, if you would like further information on each section, please go to: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter/>. Girlguiding is always looking for volunteers to help at meetings so if you do have some spare time and would like to volunteer, please see www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer.



Ouse Valley Trefoil Guild has been busy too this term. They joined in the Anglia region card swap and they also spent a night trying their hand at flower arranging. If you are interested in trying something new or just want to meet new people, Ouse Valley Trefoil division are meeting monthly and are open to anyone aged 18 and over, and no guiding experience is necessary. <https://www.trefoilguild.co.uk>.
Vikki Doyle, Girlguiding

Celebrating Literature & The Arts



What have the Friends of Stony Stratford Library been up to in 2021?

As we have nearly reached the end of another year, I thought it would be good to have a look back on what has been our second year dominated by the pandemic. Despite some easing of restrictions by the

government, local pressures on working people and building resources have meant that the rebuilding and refurbishment of our Library has made much slower progress than hoped for. As I write, the Library is still closed undergoing its facelift. However we haven't been idle!

Volunteers: We have over 30 willing library volunteers. Up to March 2020, they took care of opening the library between 9am and 10am Tuesday to Saturday and keeping the library open from 5-7pm on Thursdays. At the moment, whilst the library building is undergoing building works, many of them have volunteered to make possible a Click and Collect service for library users in Stony Stratford. Books reserved online can be collected and returned between 10am and noon on Tuesdays at York House. This service has been set up by staff at Milton Keynes Central Library and they, our local library staff and the volunteers have worked hard to maintain some form of library service locally until we can all once again use the Church Street building. We would like to thank all of those involved, particularly the volunteers who have taken this on with their usual efficiency and enthusiasm. If anyone would like to volunteer, please contact Babs Dore: babs.dore@btinternet.com

School Reading volunteers: This scheme had been running successfully for a number of years, but during 2020 our schools reading volunteer coordinator, Vicki Shakeshaft, feared that due to the pandemic our return to St Mary and St Giles School was uncertain in the near future. However in September 2021 Vicki and 4 volunteers met with the Deputy Head, and they were welcomed back with a view that when the paperwork was cleared the volunteers would be able to start. It has been made clear that we are very welcome at the school and considered an asset in the classroom. Individual circumstances and the uncertainty of the situation in society re the pandemic has left us with two volunteers for the present, and hopefully they will be able to start this term.

Events: Over the past year we have organised 9 talks via Zoom, covering a wide range of topics from local history and archaeology to science and medical research, through biography to art. Last year, Monica Else gave a wonderfully clear and positive talk about Cancer - a difficult topic - but her presentation helped many of us to understand a lot more about causes, possible cures and current research. Joe Laredo gave us two talks on the subjects of Sir Richard Burton the explorer, and Everett Ruess the artist and adventurer. We had two talks on local history and archaeology: the restoration of state rooms at Stowe; and the restoration of the water gardens at Great Linford Manor. On a wider scale we invited a Greenpeace representative to talk to us about their work and mission to save the planet - so very relevant now. Rob Gifford gave us a fascinating presentation about the little known Captain Swing agricultural riots in Bucks. During the dark days of lockdown Vanessa Horton, a previous Bard lifted our spirits with her lovely talk on poetry and last but not least, last month the MK Gallery Director inspired us to visit to see the Laura Knight exhibition.

We only started Zoom talks during 2020, but through this year I think I can safely say we all become more confident using it. Although Zoom talks can never have the same camaraderie and hospitality of a live talk followed by cake and drinks, many of our supporters are very happy to use Zoom, to ensure personal safety for those shielding, and to avoid travelling in the dark or cold or wet. We hope to return to live talks next year.

Working in partnership with MK Library services: The FoSSL Constitution outlines our role as representing the interests of the users of the Library and providing a means of dialogue between users, staff, Stony Stratford Town Council and Milton Keynes Council. Our challenges this year have been:

- *Renewing and building the relationship with Milton Keynes Council's Library service and the wider management at MKC.*
- *As the building work progresses, we are looking to find ways of getting involved in how the building will work for the community and what FoSSL can do to help source/fund facilities which will be good to have, but could not be afforded in the contract.*

The essence is partnership. The partnership with the library service and MKC, with SSTC, the partnerships with schools and other bodies in Stony and the shared endeavour involving the committee, volunteers and all friends/supporters. As you can see we have had a full year of activity, and it is a tribute to the officers and committee members of FOSSL that so much has been achieved. *If you are interested in joining us for talks, as a volunteer or committee member, you would be welcome - please drop me a line on fosslmk@gmail.com and I'd be happy to talk.*

Kathy Luff, Secretary, FOSSL

Stony Redcaps are Dancing Again!



It's a long time since we danced out: it was Stony Lights 2019. So we were very pleased to be able to dance again at Stony Lights on 27 November 2021. Stony Redcaps have been practising every Monday evening for several months, since Covid restrictions were eased, dusting off some familiar dances and also learning some new ones. The Lockdown Dance is choreographed by one of our members. It is influenced by the social distancing measures that we have been asked to follow during the pandemic, so dancers are always 2 metres apart throughout the dance. This means that we need plenty of space to perform it. The "Bendy Dance" is much more flexible and can be danced with any number of people. It is also very easy to learn.

Two of our members accepted an invitation from the Manx Folk Dance Society (MFDS) to join their 70th Anniversary Celebrations in September. The main event was a Ceilidh, which is where we learned the Bendy Dance. Unfortunately, Covid restrictions prevented dancers from Sweden and Germany attending the event, but we did catch up with friends from

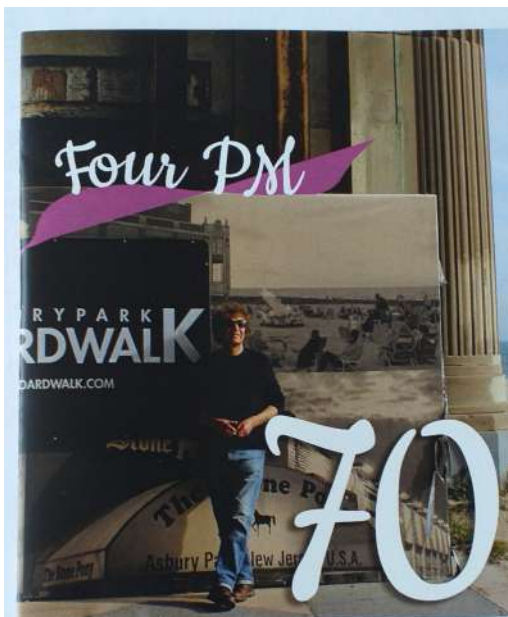
Wales, the Midlands and Uttoxeter. We have been invited to dance at various places on the island in May 2022.

We would like to welcome new dancers and musicians to the side. If you are looking for a way to keep fit and have fun, come along to one of our practices on Mondays 8–10pm at Swinfen Harris Hall, London Road, Stony Stratford. We would love to meet you and tell you what we do. www.stonyredcaps.dance.

Stony Resident Paul Martin Releases '70'

To celebrate his 70 years as a Stony Stratford Resident and 50 years involvement in the folk music scene, Paul, with his band 'Four PM', has released '70'. This album contains new tunes and songs, many featured in the local productions Meet the Mummers, Shakespeare in Song and Dance and The Peterloo Massacre.

Paul is best known for his contribution to the much acclaimed 'Cock and Bull Band'. His own compositions, based on traditional English/French Dance music, can be heard on albums recorded with Michele Welborn and Chris Jewell. '70' is the 16th



album featuring Paul since Cock and Bull released 'All Buttoned Up' which topped the Melody Maker Folk Music charts in 1982.

'Four PM' are: Paul Martin (Mandocello and Guitar); Lynn Swain (Flute and Recorders); Tom Maxwell (Melodeon and Percussion); Jane Heaney (Violin and Veille).

Guest Appearances: Simon Woodhead (Vocals); Sarah Malleon (Uilleann Pipes); Zak Woodward (Piano and vocals); Karen Lefevre, Chris Parker, Jon Stacy (Choir)

'70' is currently for sale at Odell's in Stony Stratford or from members of the band. 'Four PM' can be contacted via Facebook and silkcockandbull@gmail.com.



Made In Stony Member Exhibits at Cop26

Barry Blake, a Stony Stratford based artist and one of our 'Made in Stony' members, had his fabulous painting of the 2 lionesses selected from over 200 paintings as part of the Explorers Against Extinction exhibition at Cop26. It was displayed in the Blue Area, approaching the main conference room, from 31 October to 12 November. Explorers Against Extinction were only 1 of 15 organisations selected from over 7000 applicants to display their work and raise awareness and funds to support the charity. Barry and his paintings can be seen at 'Made in Stony' events, along with about 20 other local artisans selling their handcrafted goods.



Galley Hill Days

Flowering of new ideas on Galley Hill

Following recent gardening club activities on Galley Hill, residents on the estate have been working with the little ones at the local school (St Mary and Giles South Site) to plant a bed near the fence and make a sensory garden and maze for them to enjoy, funded by the Residents Association. As can be seen in these photographs, they've been hard at work, helped by staff members Lisa and Sue and residents Sally and Anu. We're sure that in the spring they, and passers-by, will be able to enjoy the results of all their hard work.



Not such a rubbish time

Since the Galley Hill Residents Association resumed regular litter picks on the estate, they have been very successful with quite a few bags of rubbish collected each time. Meanwhile, the number of volunteers turning up to help has been growing each occasion, as more and more people find they can spare an hour on a Sunday, once every few weeks, to help keep Galley Hill looking tidy. The picture shows the pile of litter from a recent litter pick together with just a few of the band of volunteers.



Coffee and questions being served up

Galley Hill Residents Association's Tuesday Coffee Mornings are well known not just for the free coffee, tea and biscuits, but also for their weekly quiz. Now that the situation regarding meetings has returned to something like normal, those quizzes have new question setters: Alan and Laura now set the questions jointly to test the knowledge of participants but with the format unchanged so that the first letter of the answer is provided. Recent questions included "Which pub features in Emmerdale?", clue letter W, and "In which English City does the Rugby team play at Welford Road and the Cricket team play at Grace Road?", clue letter L. Meanwhile, in early October the GHRA organised a free evening quiz night (with slightly harder questions) where six teams entered and the winning team scored 61 out of a possible 70 to win £25!

Roy Adams, GHRA

Focus on your Local Community Groups

theWI

Stony Stratford WI

We are hopefully getting back to a normal routine. We have had 3 face to face meetings already, our October one being a hands on (or should I say voices on) meeting where members told us what they had done during lockdown - gardening, exploring books by different authors, crafts (including making tote bags for the families of bereaved patients' belongings). It's surprising and reassuring what new and different activities people have discovered.

Plans for next year's meetings and events are in hand and future meetings are hoped to include a talk on the life of a local midwife, an exploration of the derivation of nursery rhymes, a local history talk and possibly a talk from a local garden centre.

The garden at York House is resting at the moment, but planting will begin again when Spring is in sight. We hope to resume our Craft and Chat afternoons when the Library re-opens in the new year. A guided walk around Stony Stratford is planned for when the weather warms up next year.

County events include a talk on Autism, a Celebration Christmas Lunch and, in the New Year, music and singing for an event about Virginia Woolf, followed by a vintage tea.

There are plans to move our County Office from its present venue in High Wycombe to Aylesbury, which should be very welcome to WIs in the north of the county. The present office is an old house, three stories high with very steep stairs, pictured here with a few WI members, it should be much more convenient, although it will hold nostalgic memories for many.



Our own WI's "Christmas" Lunch will be in January, because it is felt that people like something to look forward to when their usual Christmas celebrations are over.

Meetings are in York House, London Road at 2.15pm on the first Tuesday of every month. Visitors are welcome, give us a ring or email, or just come along. Contact Janet Baxter (01908 313677) or Gill Williams (01908 563684) or e-mail Gill.williams@fsmi.co.uk for further details.

Gill Williams, Stony Stratford WI

Stony Stratford Lions Club

Milton Keynes (Stony Stratford) Lions Club was formed in 1975 and is celebrating over 40 years of service to local, national and international communities. Our members routinely take part in Parish litter picks and assisting at various Covid-19 and Flu vaccination clinics. We organise a Food Cupboard, lead Health Walks, and support the Homeless Hub, the Women's Refuge and Willen Hospice.

We are pleased to report that on 12th October, the members of Milton Keynes Lions Clubs were able to present



a poster to commemorate the opening of the new Family Room in the Cancer Ward at Milton Keynes University Hospital. It was a proud day, after 3 years of planning, campaigning and fundraising the room has been set up and is now used by patients and family members to relax, unwind and have refreshments.

We were able to hold two evenings of Motors in the Museum on 19th August and 2nd September. Over 50 vehicles attended each event. We are hoping to organise some Sunday lunchtime meetings in the New Year.



In the last month we have continued to present local schools with books from the Ihezic Foundation, who are based in Milton Keynes and have so far distributed 70,950 books to Buckinghamshire Schools. Ihezic are currently midway through a project to provide Anambra State Government, Nigeria, with a million educational books that are being distributed to over 1,300 schools.

Although our fundraising activities have been much curtailed by Covid-19 we have still been active. Our reports to Lions Clubs International show that since the beginning of July we have served 13,325 people in 103 separate activities which took 895 volunteer member hours. We meet with a meal twice a month at Abbey Hill Golf Centre. The first Wednesday is a social evening with partners/friends and on the third Wednesday we meet to decide how to raise funds and help the community. *Please see: www.stonylions.org.uk or contact Lion Mark on 07956401196. Brian Kite, Lions Club*

Rotary



Stony Stratford Rotary Club: Support for Local Scouts

Members of Wolverton & Stony Stratford Rotary Club were

delighted to be able to make a contribution to the ongoing improvement work at the 1st Wolverton Scout Group's hall in Furze Way in the form of a £500 donation which was presented by Rotary President Alan Swann at a special Guests' Evening meeting of the club on 26 October. Jane Lynds, Chair of the club's Youth & Vocational Service Group explained "My club has had a long association with Wolverton Scouts and we admire and greatly appreciate their valuable role engaging with so many local young people".



Rotarian Rachael gets a real buzz from newfound hobby!

Rotarians are drawn from a wide cross-section of the public and as such have a diverse range of backgrounds and hobbies, perhaps one of the more unusual ones for one particular member of Wolverton & Stony Stratford club is beekeeping.

Not only has Rachael Wilson, who is also a member of the North Bucks Beekeepers Association, established a hive in her own garden and in a nearby village but she has recently set up a hive in a purpose-built enclosure on one of the London Road Allotment plots.

"I have always had an interest in the environment", explained Rachael, "and there is so much good that honeybees do for the ecosystem, other than just produce honey, especially as pollinators supporting the growth of trees, flowers and food crops."



Pictured is Rachael during a recent talk about bees and beekeeping to allotment holders at the London Road site

Further information about the club can be found on its website at <http://wolvertonandstonystratfordrotaryclub.co.uk> and on Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/wolvertonandstonyrotary/>.

Mike Thomas, PR & Communications Officer

Stony Stratford Art Society

I am glad to say that the art club is up and running again at York House; it has been such a pleasure to meet with club members again and welcome new members. In the summer the committee managed to have a meeting to discuss the future of the art club and it was decided to look into social media such as Facebook. It was also proposed to have an Open Day in August, and thanks to Jackie Stevens who made her lovely garden available for the day we had a really good flow of interested artists. The SSAS continue to have stalls at Odells Market, and thank Odells for their continued support, during the summer and autumn, hopefully this will continue in 2022. The club will support Stony Stratford Light Up Day this year and look forward to supporting all the usual events next year.

We have a good cross section of artists and crafters working in various styles and mediums. I have often tried to get to grips with landscapes in winter with the dark skies and stark wind blown trees, luckily I know that I can discuss the problem with club members they will always share their expertise and give constructive advice. The colours of autumn into winter are vibrant, which can be daunting, but

there are always people to help and give you fresh ideas and techniques to solve most problems. A lot of members have started new crafts during lockdown such as crochet, cross-stitch, macramé, etc. When we attend markets and have a stall at other events many members bring their crafts as well as pictures, so whether you are a beginner or experienced art and crafter all abilities and age groups are welcome.

Annual membership is £28 plus £1 attendance fee for each session where tea, coffee and biscuits are available. *Our pattern of meetings at York House is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoon of each month from 2pm until 4pm. The art club will be closed after the 14th December 2021, sessions will resume on February 8th 2022 at 2pm.*

We look forward to seeing existing members in the new year and any art and crafters interested in joining a supportive and welcoming group. *Further information is available from the Stony Stratford Art Society Secretary on 01296 730196.*

Esme Hopson, Secretary, Stony Stratford Art Society

The Inner Wheel Club of Wolverton is back in action!



In fact, we never really went away. All through lockdown and beyond we have kept the club going with Zoom meetings, tea parties in member's gardens when allowed, and keeping in touch in whatever way we could, and continuing to raise money for Willen Hospice and other charities.

But at last! We were able to hold our first social get together in over 18 months. And what a great evening it was. We held a 'Tastes of the World Evening' with everyone invited to come in fancy dress depicting the countries of the world. We had the opportunity to try several different main courses and desserts from around the world, followed by entertainment and a sing song with well known songs including Tulips from Amsterdam, New York - New York, Viva Espana and many others. Everyone joined in with gusto! And great fun was had by all. It was



an absolute delight to be able to meet up again and catch up with friends old and new. We raised £560 for our President's charity, not bad for our first event in ages! We are all very aware of the toll lockdown has taken on mental health, and with this in mind, our President has chosen MK Mind as her charity for this year. We are now looking forward to hosting other events and getting the club back on its feet again.

Look-out for us at Stony Stratford Christmas Market, when once again we will have a stall selling home produce etc. *If you would be interested in joining our Inner Wheel Club, or would like to find out more about us, please email us on iwwolverton@gmail.com.*

Frances Hurst, Inner Wheel Club of Wolverton

Spotlight on StonyWords



StonyWords 2022

StonyWords 2022 will run from January 21 to February 6. Unlike in 2021 when all the events were on-line, we're hoping that the 2022 Festival will be largely in person. That said, we will be abiding by any government guidance on event management and

keeping numbers at sessions limited to ensure the safety of those who attend.

The 2022 programme has a wide range of talks, concerts, drama and comedy to appeal to all ages. We start with the election of the Town Bard for 2022/3 and close with an evening of story-telling @ The Crown. There are two events for children – a Pirates Concert and a visit by Theatre of Widdershins. The Stony Playreaders group will perform Tartuffe to celebrate the 400th birthday of Molière, the great French playwright accompanying a lecture about his life and work by Joe Laredo.

The opening weekend will also include a talk on Iran and the Silk Road and Burns Night to celebrate Robert Burns. In addition, we have a range of visiting guest speakers including:

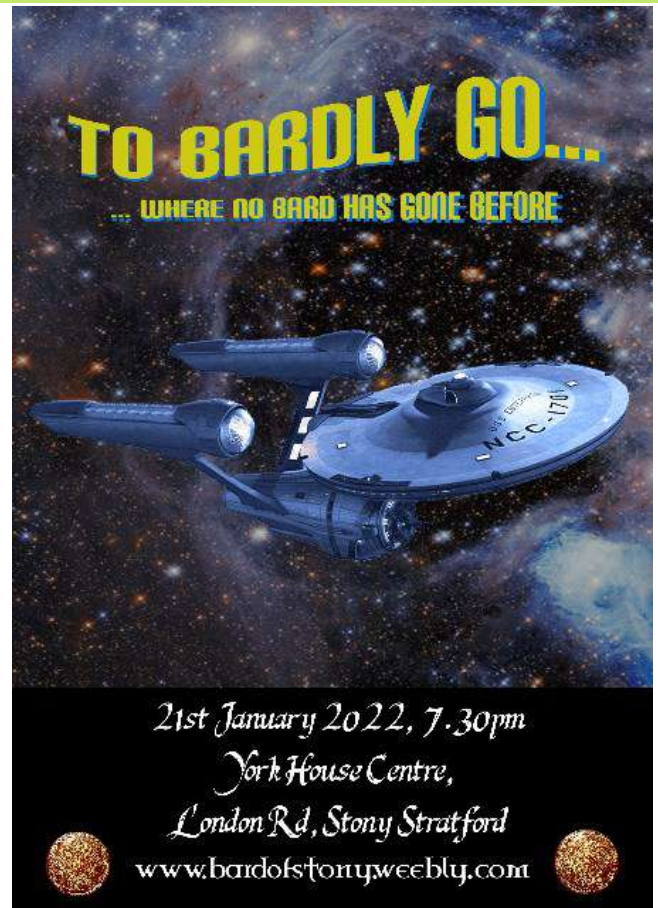


From top to bottom, left to right: Kehinde Andrews talking about his book *The New Age of Empire*, Kate Kennedy on the poet Ivor Gurney, Michael Taylor on how the British Establishment tried to prevent the abolition of slavery in the 1820s & 30s and Robert Verkaik on *Why You Won't Get Rich*.

Full details of the festival can be found at www.stonywords.org.uk together with how to get tickets and costs to attend. Please also look for posters and leaflets around the town. We look forward to seeing you at StonyWords 2022, part of Stony's contribution to the cultural life of Milton Keynes.

The Annual Bardic Trials 2022

The countdown to the next Bard of Stony Stratford has already begun! The Quest to find the 11th Bard began on the 27th November 2021, and you will have seen a number of intriguing Bardic posters displayed about the town. They are Bardic invitations! Can you write and sing your own songs, rap, make people laugh, create and tell a story, or write poetry? If you have one of these skills we would like to hear from you. Most of all we need Bardic candidates who care about Stony Stratford. You'll be creating material and performing at civic events. Please check out our website (www.bardofstony@weebly.com) for information about being Bard and full application details.



You will, of course, have to compete for this prestigious appointment in open competition before the good people of Stony Stratford on January 21st 2022 at York House. There's also a Bardic Oath which you'll need to uphold (blood oaths and dragons are not involved). Flowing cloak and two metre Bardic Pencil provided. We look forward to your Year and a Day. All hail the Bard (x3). We shall also need an audience to cheer on the candidates and to vote for their choice. Please come to York House Centre on Friday 21st January 2022, 7.30pm - 11pm (doors 7.15pm). It's free!

The Bardic Council - Terrie Howey-Moore (Chair)

Stony Storytellers: Naughty Japanese Badgers & Other Stories

To celebrate National Storytelling Week and StonyWords the Stony Storytellers in association with York House present an evening of storytelling for adults. One of the great professional storytellers of the UK, Sarah Rundle, brings her brilliant Naughty Japanese Badgers show to Stony Stratford. Japanese badgers are VERY NAUGHTY and the things they do are, frankly, unspeakable. It will, of course, all be done in the best possible taste! Ben Haggarty (one of the giants of world storytelling) describes Sarah Rundle's storytelling as "... truly magical... it sparkles with a particularly glorious humour."

The first half of the evening will be 10-15 minute stories from the Stony Storytellers (including Terrie Howey-Moore & Stephen Hobbs). Terrie is a professional storyteller, the founder of Stony Storytellers, a Stony resident, and the author of Buckinghamshire Folk Tales. After the interval it'll be over to Sarah for her one hour Naughty Japanese Badgers show. This evening is for adults only (18+). **Saturday 29th January 2022** will be an evening to remember. Storytelling with a difference. **Doors 7pm. Showtime 7.30-10.30pm.** Cash bar. Tickets (£8 +10% booking fee) from www.wegotickets.com. Further information from Stephen Hobbs: Hobbscrazybooks@aol.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

Saturday, 1st January 2022

Vintage Stony

9.30am-2pm, Market Square, Stony Stratford

'Vintage Stony' returns on New Year's Day 2022! Usual format of Pre-War vehicles being parked in our historic Market Square, Post-War vehicles in the High Street and centre car parks. Further information can be found at www.vintagestony.co.uk and our social media sites. All proceeds to Willen Hospice.

Friday, 7th January

The Song Loft: Performers Night Special Event

7.30 for 8pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford



At our Performers' Night we will feature local band Four PM who will be showcasing their latest CD. Slots will be available for all other performers too. £5 cash on the door. www.thesongloft.com.

Saturday, 15th January

French Lessons and Friends... Live in Concert

8.15-10.15pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

Three piece band, French Lessons, formed in the 70s with original song topics ranging from Paris to markets and teachers! We will be playing our first gig in Stony Stratford for 14 years and guarantee an evening of eclectic entertainment with our own songs in a variety of styles. Sharing the bill for one night only, the return of The Unlikely Brothers featuring Stony Stratford's own Bard, Andy Powell. Tickets: £8.00 from <https://www.wegottickets.com/event/531244>.

Friday, 21st January

The Song Loft: DryWood

7.30 for 8pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

Our first concert of 2022 features the local duo DryWood.



DryWood is Denise Dryburgh and Phil Underwood, multi instrumentalists and vocalists. Original and traditional songs about the canal, family and Folk heritage. All for £5, cash on the night. No advance sales for this event.

Saturday, 29th January

Pirates! Children's story and concert (StonyWords free event)

11am, Stony Stratford Library, 5-7 Church St, Stony Stratford

Come along dressed as a pirate to meet Captain Digorie Piper and his Minstrel Pirates for a morning of singing, dancing, pirate games and a sea battle! Captain Digorie and his motley crew are based on real Tudor pirate characters, and introduce you to each character through snippets of Tudor music played on Tudor instruments. This event is FREE to families due to the generosity of the Town Council and Stony Words committee.

FEBRUARY

Friday, 4th February

The Song Loft: Performers Night

7.30 for 8pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

Open Stage Night. Tickets £5 (cash) on the door. Slots available.

Saturday, 5th February

The Song Loft: Performers Night Special Event

8-10pm, York House Centre

An arresting evening promised by the star of the BBC radio series "It's a Fair Cop!". Alfie is an original and distinctive comedian with his niche area as a recently retired police sergeant. He brings a wealth of insights and comedy moments from over 20 years on the front line, where a keen sense of humour has been the key to his success and survival! Tickets £10 from www.wegottickets.com.



Friday, 18th February

The Song Loft: Claire Hastings & Jenn Butterworth

7.30 for 8pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

We welcome Claire Hastings and Jenn Butterworth two professional musicians from Scotland. Claire Hastings is a Scottish folksinger, songwriter. In 2015 she earned the prestigious title of BBC Radio Scotland's "Young Traditional Musician of the Year", and has since made a name for herself on the folk scene with her 'natural, effortless Scots voice' (FRUK). Jenn Butterworth is an acoustic folk guitarist and singer. Jenn was awarded the title "Musician of the Year" at the 2019 Scots Trad Music Awards. Tickets £14.30 via www.thesongloft.com.

Saturday, 26th February

Bob Dylan Night

8-10.45pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

Come gather round friends wherever you are and listen to some great local performers with their interpretations of Bob Dylan's songs. Covering just a sparkling sample of over forty years of the great man's works, from Freewheelin' through John Wesley Harding, to New Morning, Blood on the Tracks, and Street Legal to Time Out of Mind. This promises to be great night. Tickets £5.00 from <http://www.wegottickets.com/event/531645/>.

MARCH

Friday, 4th March

The Song Loft: Performers Night with the Tartan Painters

7.30 for 8pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

Tickets £5 (cash) on the door. Slots available. Cash bar.

Saturday, 5th March

The Pitmatics

8-10.45pm, York House Centre, London Rd, Stony Stratford

The Pitmatics is an exciting folk band who perform original and cover songs. They tell powerful stories with great arrangements, superb musicianship and stunning harmonies. This four-piece band play multiple and varied instruments and use thought provoking lyrics, mixed with funny and sing-along songs, to keep their audiences entertained. Tickets £8.00 from <http://www.wegottickets.com/event/529053>. www.pitmatics.co.uk.

Friday, 18th March

The Song Loft: Moonrakers

7.30 for 8pm, York House

This Oxford-based Celtic folk group consists of harp, cello, mandola, guitar, whistles and vocals. "Startlingly talented" - *Oxford Times*. Tickets £14.30 via www.thesongloft.com.



Stony Stratford Lantern Project 2021



Stony Stratford Lantern Project 2021 – The Windy One... As the Covid-19 Pandemic continued during 2021, there was much discussion between SS Business Association and the CLASS Committee as to if the Switch-On Fun Day should go ahead and, if so, what we could do to make it as safe as possible for the volunteers and the people coming along to enjoy the day. Compromises were made and we agreed that both the Switch-On Day and Lantern Project would go ahead but there would be no Lantern Parade, as it draws in such large crowds of spectators.

The Lantern Volunteers decided to deliver a 'hybrid' version of the project, with a limited number of 'make at home' lantern kits being sold online to include all the materials and instructions needed to make a Father Christmas lantern for this year's theme of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town!". The kits sold out quickly and were collected via sessions at York House, one of which took place during a 'mini hurricane' which saw branches falling from trees and damage to the building!

The drama didn't stop there, as Storm Arwen was forecast to hit the town on Switch-On Day (Saturday 27 November). The fairground rides, stalls and dancing went ahead despite the dreadful weather, but the CLASS Committee were forced to think on their feet and change the live music and switch-on proceedings planned for the Market Square. In the end, a

pleasingly large crowd braved the high winds and amassed for the switch-on, some people proudly displaying their lanterns, and Stony Radio saved the day by leading the countdown via a speaker stuck out of a window at The Crown. The lights came on at 5pm and looked wonderful with the Christmas tree back in place, and The AcaBellas followed this up by leading the community carol singing. Not a day any of us will forget in a hurry!

Huge thanks to all the Lantern Volunteers who organised and ran the project this year for being innovative, hardworking and flexible - but mostly for being good humoured in the face of adversity. We usually make a giant lantern for the back of the Lantern Parade, but there was no need for that again this year. Instead, we set to work making a 'Rainbow of Father Christmases' for the switch-on and thoroughly enjoyed soaking up the fantastic atmosphere in the Market Square.

Finally, grateful thanks to our funders – Stony Stratford Town Council, Stony Stratford Business Association and the York House Local Giving Fund - for their continued financial support, helping us to keep the project affordable for all.

Will we back to 'normal' in 2022? Who knows...?

Fiona Trinder, Stony Stratford Lantern Project

Join our Facebook Group – Stony Stratford Lantern Project - for the latest project news

